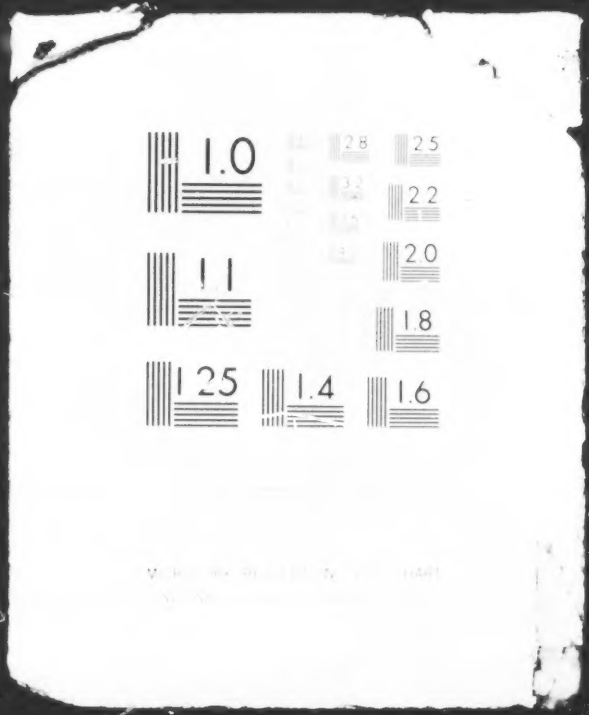
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ABSTRACT

The degree, type, and dimensions of institutional adaptation to adult students are the bases of concern. Higher education institutions are challenged to provide concepts and systems to meet adult learner's needs. In 1975, 27 million adults participated in structured learning experiences. The adult's demand for degrees and access to intellectual resources has been accelerating. In response to these demands, administrators and educators have initiated various adaptations, such as flexible schedules, environments compatible and supportive of subjects learned, special admission and retention policies, interdisciplinary degrees and programs, mass media utilization, and educational experiences conceived as holistic programs. Many administrators and faculty fear education geared to adults implies lowering of academic standards, but adult educators have learned that excellence may be achieved regardless of age, course location, or instructional method. Three barriers which restrict adult access to higher education are heavy reliance on grades for educational assessment, the system of accumulating and transferring credits, and the limited availability of financial aid. Adults' admissions into higher education institutions on the subjective criterion of "adequacy" and the slower increase of adult enrollment (compared with rapid growth in community colleges) means that although adaptive efforts have been made, overall efforts have been inadequate. (CSS)

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ADAPTING INSTITUTIONS TO ADULTS

A Lecture Given Before
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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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"ADAPTING INSTITUTIONS TO ADULTS"

THE VERY TITLE OF THIS SESSION -- ADAPTATION OF INSTITUTIONS TO ADULTS -- CALLS UP A CINEMATIC IMAGE. PICTURE IF YOU WILL, A TRADITIONAL COLLEGE CAMPUS -- LUSH GREEN LAWNS, STATELY BUILDINGS,HERE AND THERE A CLUSTER OF STUDENTS, STUDYING ON THE STEPS, FACULTY EMERGING FROM THEIR LIBRARIES, STOPPING FOR A MOMENT OF SUN. THE ROLES OF ADMINISTRATOR, FACULTY AND STUDENT ARE CLEARLY DEFINED; AND HOVERING OVER THE LANDSCAPE IS RECOGNITION OF THE LOCUS OF DECISION-MAKING AND THE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE. ADAPTATION CHANGES THIS IMAGE, OF COURSE, BUT THE WORD ITSELF CONTAINS A SENSE OF ADD-ON: A TEMPORARY BUILDING ATTACHED TO THE MAIN LIBRARY, A TRAILER PARKED BEHIND THE SCIENCE BUILDING, A CLOSET CONVERTED TO AN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATOR OF THE NEW PROJECT.

SO THE DEGREE, THE TYPE AND THE DIMENSIONS OF THESE ADAPTIVE CHANGES FOR NEW STUDENTS -- THE SUBJECT OF MANY SESSIONS HERE AT THIS CONFERENCE, EVEN A PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP -- ARE THE BASES OF MY CONCERN HERE TODAY. ARE THE CHANGES COSMETIC, PRESENTING AN APPEARANCE OF ACCOMMODATION? ARE THEY THE RESULT OF CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC TRENDS THAT AFFECT THE TOTAL INSTITUTION? OR ARE THEY EVEN THE RESPONSE OF CONSIDERED POLICY REFORMULATION WHICH INTENDS TO INTEGRATE OLD AND NEW?

WHY THIS SUDDEN SURGE OF INTEREST IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ADULT STUDENTS? AFTER ALL, UNIVERSITY EXTENSIONS (BY WHATEVER NAME THEY ARE CALLED) ARE NOT NEW; SOME ARE MORE THAN 75 YEARS OLD. THE LITERATURE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION TAKES US BACK TO THE EDUCATION OF NURSES WHO WERE HEADED OVER-SEAS FOR WORLD WAR I. IN TIMES OF TURMOIL. . . THE CITIZENING OF THE WAVES OF IMMIGRANTS THROUGHOUT THE NATION'S HISTORY, THE TRAINING OF INEXPERIENCED MANPOWER DURING WORLD WAR II, AND THE

RECENT ATTEMPTS AT SOLVING RACIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BY THE CREATION OF NEW PROFESSIONALS AND PARA-PROFESSIONALS. . .THE COUNTRY HAS TURNED TO ADULT EDUCATORS TO GET THE JOB DONE. BUT THESE HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN AS PART OF THE REGULAR MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY; RATHER THEY HAVE BEEN EXTRA, UNIQUE, OR EVEN OVERLOAD.

BUT NOW EXPECTATIONS ARE DIFFERENT.

TODAY INDIVIDUAL ADULTS EXPECT THAT THEIR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING WILL SERVE THEIR NEEDS ON A CONSISTENT BASIS AND THAT THE NECESSARY FACILITATION WILL OCCUR AS CHANGES EMERGE.

AS I SEE IT, THEN, THE CHALLENGE FOR THE NEXT DECADE IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAPACITY OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO PROVIDE BOTH CONCEPT AND SYSTEMS SUITABLE FOR THE POTENTIAL POPULATION OF ADULT LEARNERS.

I SAY "POTENTIAL" BECAUSE NATIONAL STATISTICS INDICATE THAT 27 MILLION ADULTS WERE PARTICIPATING IN SOME FORM OF STRUCTURED LEARNING IN 1975. OF THESE 27 MILLION, 6.6 MILLION, WERE WORKING TOWARD COLLEGE DEGREES; ANOTHER 1.3 MILLION, FOR OTHER CREDIT; AND 17 MILLION WERE TAKING NONCREDIT COURSES. THE RATE OF GROWTH IN THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS -- IN NON-CREDIT, PART-TIME COURSEWORK ALONE -- INCREASED 52 % FROM 1972 TO 1975.[1] ONE MUDDY AREA, HOWEVER STEMS FROM THE DEFINITION OF "PART-TIME STUDENTS," WHO TEND TO BE ADULTS, AND THEIR INCLUSION OR EXCLUSION IN THE ENROLLMENT FIGURES OF THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES. SOME STATISTICS SHOW THEM SEPARATELY, WHILE OTHERS ATTEMPT TO ADD THE HOURS AND EQUATE THE RESULT AS "FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS." DESPITE THE QUESTIONS OF WHETHER PART-TIME STUDENTS ARE INCLUDED OR NOT, AND EXACTLY HOW WE ARRIVE AT THE ENROLLMENT FIGURES, THE IMPORTANT POINT HERE IS THAT PART-TIME STUDENTS HAVE BECOME COUNTABLE IN CREDITABLE NUMBERS. THE DEMAND BY ADULTS FOR DEGREES AND FOR ACCESS TO THE INTELLECTUAL RESOURCES OF THE CAMPUSES HAS BEEN ACCELERATING AS NON-CREDIT INCREASED EARLIER.

UNFORTUNATELY, MANY EDUCATORS ARE NOT YET RECONCILED WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT THESE ADULT LEARNERS MAY, IN THE NEAR FUTURE, CONSTITUTE A TRULY SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE STUDENT POPULATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION. BUT ENOUGH ADMINISTRATORS ARE AWARE OF THE PROMISE ALONG WITH THE PROBLEMS TO BEGIN THE SOMEWHAT STRENUOUS PROCESS OF ADAPTATION, INNOVATION, OR REORGANIZATION.

CONSEQUENTLY, TWIN QUESTIONS CONFRONT EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THIS PERIOD OF CHANGE: ARE WE ADEQUATELY PREPARED TO ACCOMMODATE TO THE NEEDS OF THESE NEW STUDENTS? ARE WE DOING SO TO BOLSTER OUR "REAL" PURPOSES OF RESEARCH AND TEACHING REGULAR STUDENTS? OR TO RESPOND TO A REDIRECTION IN GOALS? ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL ALSO ANSWER THE EARLIER QUESTIONS REGARDING COSMETIC PROGRAMS VERSUS POLICY AND PHILOSOPHY REVISION. NONETHELESS THESE QUESTIONS DEFY A SIMPLE CLEAR-CUT RESPONSE OF "YES" OR "NO". INDEED, ANY SIMPLE RESPONSE DEVELOPED FROM SWEEPING GENERALIZATIONS RUNS THE RISK OF FAILING TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE OF THE DIVERSE PATTERNS HIGHER INSTITUTIONS HAVE THUS FAR ADOPTED TO RECOGNIZE THE SPECIAL ASPECTS OF THESE ADULT LEARNERS.

GIVEN THE DIVERSITY OF SETTINGS UNDER WHICH ADULTS STUDY NOWADAYS, LET ME BE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE USE HERE IN REFERRING TO THE TRADITIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF 4-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. THE EXCLUSION OF OTHER POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS IN NO WAY DENIES THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF THEIR ACTIVITIES VIS-À-VIS ADULTS. COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE EDUCATING INCREASING NUMBERS OF ADULTS. FROM 20% OF ALL STUDENTS IN 1965, TO NEARLY 35% IN 1975, IT IS PROJECTED THAT 43% OF ALL STUDENTS WILL BE ENROLLED IN TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS BY 1985.[2] IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT COMMUNITY COLLEGES EACH YEAR RECORD AN OLDER AVERAGE AGE FOR THEIR STUDENTS SO THAT THEIR TYPICAL STUDENTS (AS WITH THOSE IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES) ARE PART-TIME AND ADULT, HOW WELL THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

ARE CARRYING OUT THEIR MISSION IS A SUBJECT FOR ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PAPER. WHILE THERE ARE SOME SIMILARITIES IN RESPONSE AND RESULT, THE ISSUES, THE PROBLEMS, AND THE RESOLUTIONS ARE VERY DIFFERENT.

ANOTHER SEPARATION IS THE DEGREE-GRANTING ASPECT WHICH I WISH TO EMPHASIZE, RATHER THAN EXTENSION THOUGH EXTENSION HAS OFTENER THAN NOT TAKEN THE FIRST RISK,THE INITIAL STEP.

LET ME TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO ELABORATE ON INSTITUTIONAL ADAPTATIONS ATTEMPTED THUS FAR, BEFORE I TURN TO SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT WE HAVE YET TO RESOLVE.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, THERE ARE SIX MAJOR TYPES OF ADAPTATION WHICH COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HAVE RESORTED TO IN TRYING TO ACCOMMODATE TO THEIR NEW STUDENT POPULATIONS. FIRST (AND THE MOST OBVIOUS) IS THE LAUDABLE EFFORT BY MANY INSTITUTIONS TO MAKE THEIR SCHEDULES MORE FLEXIBLE. BEGINNING WITH THE MOVING OF GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL COURSES TO HOURS CONVENIENT TO ADULTS, FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE NOW BEEN EXTENDED INTO THE UNDERGRADUATE YEARS. MOREOVER, SHORT-INTENSIVE PROGRAMS ASSUMING THE NAMES OF "EDUCATIONAL VACATIONS," "WEEKEND COLLEGES," "SEMINARS," "CONFERENCES," "INSTITUTES," "WORKSHOPS," "LEARN-INS," "MINI-COURSES," "CLINICS," ETS., ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO LEARNERS ON BOTH A CREDIT AND A NON-CREDIT BASIS.[3]

ASSOCIATED WITH THE INCREASED FLEXIBILITY OF SCHEDULING IS THE SECOND ADAPTATION. A REVISION OF THE TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF THE PHYSICAL SETTING IN WHICH HIGHER LEARNING TAKES PLACE HAS PRODUCED SOME INGENIOUS ATTEMPTS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT MORE COMPATIBLE AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE SUBJECTS LEARNED. FOR EXAMPLE, A COMMUNITY IN MINATURE IS ESTABLISHED IN ORDER TO STUDY SOME COMMUNAL PROBLEMS; WHILE A CONFERENCE CENTER IS MODELED AFTER THE UNITED NATIONS TO HOUSE PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE IN MULTILINGUAL CONTEXT. FIELD WORK TAKES STUDENTS INTO THE COMMUNITY, FUNCTIONING AS TUTORS, COUNSELORS, PLANNERS, LIASION. LESS DRAMATIC

BUT EQUALLY EXPERIMENTAL ARE ENTIRE COURSES VIA INDEPENDENT STUDY THROUGH AUDIO/VIDEO TAPES OR STUDY GUIDES--LEARNING AT HOME. FOR CONVENIENCE, ALONG WITH THESE ARE THE NEW SITES OF OFFICE BUILDINGS, FACTORIES, MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND STORE FRONTS. UNDERGRADUATE AS WELL AS ADVANCED DEGREE LEARNING ARE TAKING PLACE IN SETTINGS VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE TRADITIONAL FOUR-WALLED CLASSROOMS!

A THIRD INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE IS EVIDENCED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL ADMISSION AND RETENTION POLICIES. SOME OFFER ACCESS TO SENIOR CITIZENS AND MINORITY ADULTS AS STUDENTS OR AUDITORS. WHILE THE RIGID QUOTAS FOR THESE SPECIAL GROUPS OF STUDENTS ARE FAR FROM BEING IDEAL, AND VERY OFTEN TRIGGER VIGOROUS DEBATES AND INVITE INTERVENTION FROM UNEXPECTED QUARTERS, THEY ARE INDICATIVE OF EFFORTS TO OFFER GREATER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY TO DISADVANTAGED GROUPS. ALSO, THE GROWING INTEREST IN "STOPPING -OUT" PROGRAMS SIGNIFIES ATTEMPTS TO FORMALIZE THE IN-AND-OUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS IN ORDER TO REMOVE THE BARRIERS TRADITIONALLY ERECTED AGAINST THOSE WHO DROP-OUT--OFTEN FOR ADULT LIFE REASONS. ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL, WOMEN'S PROGRAMS HAVE FLOURISHED UNDER THE WARMTH OF SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS, WITH CLASSES FOCUSED ON WOMEN'S NEEDS FOR TUTORING IN MATHEMATICS OR THE SCIENCES.

A FOURTH COMMON RESPONSE TO THE PRESENCE OF ADULT LEARNERS ON THE PART OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERDISCIPLINARY DEGREES AND PROGRAMS. THE TRADITIONAL COMPARTMENTALIZATION OF SUBJECTS AND DISCIPLINES HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY INADEQUATE IN TRYING TO SATISFY THE WIDE SPECTRUM OF ADULT LEARNERS' NEEDS AND INTERESTS. THE EXISTENCE OF PROGRAMS AWARDING DEGREES OF BACHELORS AND MASTERS IN GENERAL STUDIES, LIBERAL ARTS, AND LIBERAL SCIENCES AND THE GROWING CLUSTER OF SPECIAL SUBJECTS SUCH AS TECHNICAL WRITING, OR SPORTS ADMINISTRATION HAS GIVEN A FAR GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN THE CHOICE OF COURSES THAN HITHERTO HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS. IN MANY WAYS, THESE SIGNIFY A BREAK FROM THE

HOMOGENEITY OF OFFERINGS THAT NEWMAN, IN HIS REPORT, IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE MAJOR ILLS OF HIGHER INSTITUTIONS. MOREOVER, THEY SATISFY THE TYPICALLY PRAGMATIC APPROACH WHICH ADULTS AS STUDENTS HAVE.

A FIFTH STRATEGY THAT MORE AND MORE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ARE EMPLOYING IN REACHING OUT TO THE MASS OF ADULT LEARNERS IS THE CAPITALIZATION OF MASS MEDIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF KNOWLEDGE. THE UTILIZATION OF TELEVISION, RADIO, AND NEWSPAPER HAS, FOR THE FIRST TIME, MADE POSSIBLE THE TRANSFORMATION OF A DELIVERY SYSTEM FROM THAT WHICH REACHED A HANDFUL TO AUDIENCES A HUNDRED OR A THOUSAND TIMES MORE. AS TECHNOLOGY MAKES POSSIBLE HIGHLY INDIVIDUALIZED INTER-ACTIVE LONG-DISTANCE COMMUNICATION WE CAN SERVE THE FORMERLY DISENFRANCHISED. TO SOME IT SEEMS THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME THE UTOPIAN VISION OF A LEARNED SOCIETY IS ON THE HORIZON(OR IN THE TUBE).

METHOD SIX IS PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT TO ASSESS IN TERMS OF COST BENEFIT AND THE POTENTIAL FOR BEING REPLICATED. COVERING THE COLLECTION OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES CONCEIVED AS HOLISTIC PROGRAMS AND TYPICALLY FOSTERED BY THE CHALLENGE OF SPECIAL FUNDING, THEY RANGE THE CONTINUUM OF CONTRACT LEARNING, SIMULATION GAMING, AND THE INTENSE APPLICATIONS IDENTIFIED AS "HAWTHORNE" EFFECT PROGRAMS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THESE DESCRIBED HERE IN VARIOUS WORKSHOPS.

SMALLER INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN GENERAL SEEM TO HAVE BUILT STEPPING STONES ACROSS THE CHASM OF TRADITION MORE EASILY THAN THE LARGE AND PUBLICLY SUPPORTED ONES. BUT EVEN THAT GENERALIZATION IS NOT TOTALLY CORRECT, FOR SEVERAL MAJOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES HAVE DESIGNATED ONE OR MORE OF THE RESPONSES MENTIONED AS MEANS FOR INCLUDING ADULTS IN THEIR CAMPUS PLANNING AND USE OF THEIR RESOURCES.

CONFUSION ABOUNDS, THEREFORE, THROUGHOUT THE NATION AND IN MOST COMMUNITIES AS ADULTS TRY TO DISCOVER WHICH INSTITUTION IS THEIR BEST ALTER-

NATIVE, OR EVEN IF THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES. CONSEQUENTLY WE'VE SEEN THE RAPID RISE OF SPECIAL COUNSELING AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR ADULT LEARNERS. PEER COUNSELING, GROUP COUNSELING, COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS HAVE MUSHROOMED. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF FOUNDATION AND FEDERAL FUNDS ARE HELPING TO FOCUS AND MAINTAIN ADULT STUDENTS.

CONSIDERING THIS EXPLOSION IN PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES, THERE ARE FEW AVAILABLE DATA ABOUT THE RESULTANT PATTERNS AND CONSEQUENCES OF EFFORTS AS INSTITUTIONS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO MEET THE ADVANCE OF ADULTS WHO SEEK SOME SHARE OF THE RESOURCES OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. WE NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE ATTEMPTED SPECIFIC ADAPTATIONS AND EQUALLY URGENTLY WE NEED THEIR ASSESSMENTS OF COSTS AND BENEFITS. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, LITTLE IS KNOWN EXCEPT IN IMPRESSIONISTIC TERMS. WE CAN DESCRIBE BETTER THE INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES THAN WE CAN PLOT THE CONSEQUENT CHANGES OR EVALUATE THEIR OUTCOMES. WHILE ON THE WHOLE, THESE CHANGES HAVE BEEN CREATED THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO SAW THE NECESSITY FOR NEW FUNCTIONS AND GOALS, WE ALSO KNOW THAT THERE ARE A FEW SPLENDID EXAMPLES OF TOTAL REASSESSMENT OF THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTION.

WE DO KNOW MUCH MORE ABOUT THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF EXTENSION SPONSORED CONTINUING EDUCATION. ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION ACTIVITIES WERE OFFERED BY 2,225 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES DURING 1975-76 AND REGISTRATIONS TOTALLED 8.8 MILLION.[5] THE FLOWERING OF ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF EDUCATION FOR ADULTS WHICH HAS OCCURRED IN THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES HAS FOSTERED A RICHNESS OF ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS, AND AN UNEQUALED ARRAY OF EXPERIMENTATION. THERE HAS BEEN A CONCENTRATION OF STRIVING TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF ADULTS AND TO CREATE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE FROM A WIDE RANGE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS. ON THE WHOLE, CONTINUING EDUCATION SEES AS MAJOR ROLE THE FACILITATING OF SOCIAL CHANGE.

WE ALSO KNOW THAT MANY PROBLEMS STILL EXIST THAT BAR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS FROM THE FULL REALIZATION OF PROVIDING FOR ADULT LEARNERS. FOREMOST IS THE DEEP-SEATED NOTION OF "ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE." ACCUSTOMED TO THE MORE SELECTIVE BODY OF YOUNG ADULTS WHO HAVE REACHED HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH THE FAMILIAR ACADEMIC PATH, MOST COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY ALIKE SEEM TO BE OBSESSED WITH THE FEAR THAT EDUCATION GEARED TO ADULTS IMPLIES A LOWERING OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS. (IT MAY HELP TO BE REMINDED THAT WE IN ADULT EDUCATION HAVE HAD THE SAME CONCERN FOR QUALITY BUT HAVE LEARNED THAT EXCELLENCE MAY BE ACHIEVED, REGARDLESS OF THE AGE OF THE STUDENT, THE LOCATION OF THE COURSE OR THE METHOD OF INSTRUCTION.) STILL, THE VERY FACT THAT EXTENSION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS ARE TREATED AS "SECONDARY CITIZENS" IN THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY AND THAT USUALLY THE CREDITS AWARDED BY EXTENSION COURSES ARE NOT CONSIDERED EQUIVALENT TO THOSE OF REGULAR PROGRAMS, POINTS OUT A PERSISTENT RESISTANCE TO SOME FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

EXAMINATION OF THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO PRESERVE "ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE" HIGHLIGHTS CERTAIN SYSTEMS. ONE IS THE TIME-BASED CREDIT HOUR SYSTEM OF MEASURING INSTRUCTION WHERE GRADING AND TESTING ASSESS NOT SO MUCH STUDENTS' INTELLECTUAL GROWTH BUT RATHER A RITE OF PASSAGE REQUIRED FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL. GRADES AND SCORES THUS OBTAINED, AS RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN ON VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL GROUPS SHOWS, BEAR LITTLE OR NO RELATIONSHIP TO ANY MEASURE OF ADULT ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE FIELD. THE GROWING CORPORATE ROLE OF TRAINING AND RETRAINING OF THE EMPLOYEES GRADUATED FROM INSTITUTIONS COMBINED WITH THE PROJECTED ESTIMATION THAT ONLY 20% OF THE JOBS DURING THE 1980'S WILL UTILIZE KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED BY A COLLEGE STUDENT, RAISES OTHER SERIOUS QUESTIONS. ALTHOUGH THE EXAMPLES ABOVE ARE TIED TO INSTRUMENTAL LEARNING, THE SAME CRITIQUE APPLIES TO THE VALIDATION OF EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES.

THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM OF QUALITY CONTROL SEEMS TO ARISE FROM A DEEPLY ENTRENCHED RELIANCE ON ONE SET OF CRITERIA IN ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY. STATISTICALLY, IT IS SELF-EVIDENT THAT ON ANY UNIDIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENT, ABOUT HALF OF THE POPULATION WILL, BY DEFINITION, FALL BELOW THE AVERAGE. TO ADULTS, SUCH A TRADITIONAL APPROACH IS BOUND TO SEEM UNJUST. TO SOCIETY, SUCH AN APPROACH APPEARS TO BE OBSOLETE AS CONTEMPORARY LIVING CALLS FOR, EITHER SELECTIVELY OR COLLECTIVELY, COMPLEX DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN ABILITIES.

MANY HAVE EXPLORED WAYS TO MEASURE THE CAPABILITIES DEVELOPED THROUGH LIFE EXPERIENCE AS WELL AS CLASSROOM WORK. SOME OF YOU HAVE EXPERIMENTED WITH INNOVATIVE LEARNING CONTRACTS. OTHERS HAVE TRIED MODULES ORGANIZED ALONG FRESH CONCEPTUAL OR CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS THAT CAN ASSIST STUDENTS TO FOCUS THEIR LONG RANGE PLANS; FOR EXAMPLE, THE VOCATIONAL/PROFESSIONAL, DISCIPLINARY/INTERDISCIPLINARY, HOLISTIC/THEMATIC, OR PROBLEM-ORIENTED MODES AS DESCRIBED BY NANCY AVAKIAN AND ROBERT TOFT IN LIFELONG LEARNERS--A NEW CLIENTELE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.[6] THE COALITIONS OF DIFFERENT FACULTY, DIFFERENT COURSE DESIGN, AND DIFFERENT ADMINISTRATORS MAY PRODUCE STUNNING NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE CAMPUS AS A WHOLE. OR, THEY MAY BE CLASSED AS "DIFFERENT," AND THEREFORE "LESS" -- IN QUALITY AND ACCEPTANCE BY THE "REGULARS."

PERHAPS BECAUSE THESE INNOVATIVE STEPS ARE MORE THAN ADAPTATIONS, AND BECAUSE THE WAY TO CERTIFY ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IS NOT YET AGREED UPON, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE GROWTH IN MOVING MAJOR INSTITUTIONS IN THESE DIRECTIONS.

A SECOND BARRIER WHICH PROHIBITS WIDER ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION BY RETURNING ADULT LEARNERS IS THE SYSTEM OF ACCUMULATING CREDITS, WHICH UNTIL NOW HAS BEEN PRIMARILY DESIGNED FOR REGULAR STUDENTS. SURELY IT IS NOT TOTALLY UNJUSTIFIED FOR INSTITUTIONS TO DENY SOME CREDITS ACQUIRED BY ADULT LEARNERS WHEN TRANSFERRING FROM ONE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY TO

ANOTHER, SINCE COURSES OF THE SAME TITLE TAUGHT BY DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS EQUIVALENT. (OF COURSE, THE SAME ARGUMENT CAN ALSO BE USED AGAINST COURSES OFFERED BY DIFFERENT INSTRUCTORS IN THE SAME INSTITUTION.) IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT HIGH RATE OF MOBILITY, INABILITY TO ACCUMULATE ONE'S CREDITS DISCOURAGES MANY POTENTIAL ADULT LEARNERS FROM EMBARKING UPON FURTHER STUDIES.

A SIMILAR PROBLEM ENCOUNTERED BY ADULT LEARNERS AS THEY ATTEMPT TO CHANGE FROM ONE PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM TO ANOTHER IS THE NEGATION OF MOST IF NOT ALL CREDITS ACCUMULATED FROM A PREVIOUS PROGRAM. THE ANTICIPATION OF STARTING AGAIN FROM SQUARE ONE NORMALLY REDUCES WHATEVER MOTIVATION MOST ADULT LEARNERS INITIALLY POSSESS.

A THIRD CATEGORY OF ISSUES RESTRICTING ADAPTATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ADULTS CAN BE GROSSLY LABELED AS FINANCIAL. THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EXTENSION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION REPORTS THAT AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 1977, 395 FEDERALLY-SUPPORTED POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS WERE IN OPERATION. WHILE 212 HAD AS THEIR PRINCIPAL FOCUS CONTINUING EDUCATION OR COMMUNITY SERVICE, ONLY A FEW RELATE DIRECTLY TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.[7] OF THE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS EXPENDED IN THE 395 PROGRAMS, ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION IS PEGGED FOR UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS. IN FACT, DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO PERSISTANT AND CONTINUOUS ADULT LEARNERS IS LEFT LARGELY TO NON-GOVERNMENTAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS. BECAUSE THERE IS LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION OF ADULTS, THE DECISION TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT RESTS WITH STATE GOVERNMENTS OR SEPARATE INSTITUTIONAL BUDGETS. THE RESULT, AS YOU KNOW, IS AN UNEVEN AND UNFAIR COST PATTERN FOR ADULTS.

CURRENTLY, THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS LARGELY FINANCED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TUITION FEES WITH SOME FEW CASES OF FOUNDATION OR GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS. OBVIOUSLY, THESE SOURCES BECOME RESPONSIBLE FOR DETERMINING THE DIRECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION. IN THE CASE OF EXTENSION THE COURSES BECOME

" TUITION-DRIVEN." THAT IS, THROUGH THE LACK OF FUNDING, PART-TIME OFFERINGS FOR ADULTS ARE IN ALMOST ALL CASES DETERMINED BY AN ADEQUATE NUMBER PAYING SUBSTANTIAL FEES TO COVER COSTS. ON ANOTHER FINANCIAL LEVEL, IF THE INSTITUTION IS DEVELOPING NEW WAYS OF ACCOMMODATING ADULTS IN THE REGULAR PROGRAM FOR THE WRONG REASON (I.E., TO BOLSTER DECLINING ENROLLMENTS,) THE RESULTANT ACADEMIC COURSES AND STUDENT SERVICES MAY BE LESS THAN APPROPRIATE. EQUALLY DISFUNCTIONAL AND SURELY AS FINANCIAL AT THE CORE IS THE USE OF TENURED FACULTY WHOSE FIELDS ARE NOW LESS IN DEMAND OR WHOSE TEACHING CAPABILITIES HAVE NEVER BEEN THEIR STRONG POINT.

SOLUTIONS TO THESE FINANCIAL ISSUES, AS I SEE IT, ARE NOT TOO DISSIMILAR FROM THOSE PROPOSED FOR TACKLING POLITICAL ISSUES. EFFECTIVE POLITICING ON THE PART OF EDUCATORS MIGHT ENSURE, THROUGH ADEQUATE POLICY FORMULATION, A PERMANENT COMMITMENT BY GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS, ON ALL LEVELS, TO FOSTER THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS. WITH SUCH COMMITMENT, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES COULD MOVE TO EQUALIZE TUITION RATES FOR PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME CREDIT FOR ADULT LEARNERS ON A PROPORTIONATE STUDENT-COURSE LOAD BASIS. AT THE SAME TIME PROVISION SHOULD ALSO BE MADE TO ENSURE ELIGIBILITY OF PART-TIME STUDENTS IN ALL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS, INCLUDING SCHOLARSHIPS, LOANS, AND OUTRIGHT GRANTS.

ANOTHER LEVEL OF POLITICAL STRESS CENTERS IN THE GROWING INTRA-INSTITUTIONAL CONCERN ABOUT THE AMBIGUITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY WITH THE SEARCH FOR A DEFINITION OF JURISDICTION FOR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITY EXTENSION, BOTH IN ADMINISTRATION AND INSTRUCTION. WITH THE DECLINE OF REGULAR STUDENTS, THE UNCLASSIFIED RESPONSIBILITIES OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND SCHOOLS TOWARD SERVING THE PART-TIME STUDENT CLIENTELE FURNISH SOURCES OF CONTINUED TENSION AND CONFLICT. SUCH INTERNAL TENSION IS FURTHER AGGRAVATED BY THE INCREASINGLY TENSE EXTERNAL COMPETITION WITH OTHER COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOR MANY OF THE SAME STUDENTS. THE COMPLEXITY OF FINANCIAL AND

POLITICAL ENTANGLEMENT TENDS TO DISTRACT ADMINISTRATORS FROM ESTABLISHING ACCURATE PRIORITIES FOR THE NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS, AND CONSUMES EDUCATORS' ENERGY IN THE GAME OF SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

IN FACE OF BUDGETARY RESTRAINTS, THE PROBLEM OF FINANCING THE EDUCATION OF ADULTS CAN FURTHER BE TACKLED THROUGH THE POOLING OF RESOURCES OF SEVERAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE SAME REGION. THE NEW ENGLAND MODEL[8] (AND OTHERS) OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING TO ALLOCATE PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES COULD BE ADAPTED. SUCH A COOPERATIVE APPROACH HAS THE ADDITIONAL SIDE-EFFECT OF FOSTERING FUTURE REGIONAL EFFORTS TO RESPOND TO THE GROWING NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS.

THROUGH THE MANY DEVICES DESCRIBED HERE AND ELSEWHERE WE SEE THE PROMISE OF HARNESSING CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION TO COPE WITH NEW CONSTITUENCIES. INDEED THE RELATIVELY SUBJECTIVE CRITERION OF "ADEQUACY," CAST IN THE LIGHT OF THE ADMISSION OF ADULT LEARNERS INTO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE RELATIVE SLOWER INCREASE OF ADULT ENROLLMENT IN THESE SAME INSTITUTIONS (COMPARED WITH THE RAPID GROWTH IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES), MAKES IT SAFE FOR ME TO ASSERT THAT SURELY WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO ADAPT, BUT OUR EFFORTS, EN BLOC, HAVE BEEN INADEQUATE. THOUGH THE PROBLEMS ARE YET TO BE RESOLVED, WE HAVE A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO RE-EXAMINE EXISTING POLICIES WHICH HAVE TOO LONG BEEN TAKEN FOR GRANTED. THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY, WE REALIZE THAT EACH PERIOD OF GREAT CHALLENGE HAS ALSO BEEN A PERIOD OF GREAT INVENTION. PROPELLED BY RAPID SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES WE HAVE SURELY ENTERED A STAGE OF TRIAL AND TEST. THE ABILITY TO FULFILL THE EGALITARIAN MANDATE OF A NEW LEARNING SOCIETY RESTS UPON OUR CONCERTED WISDOM IN DEVELOPING NEW INSIGHT, DEVISING FRESH STRATEGIES, AND EXECUTING BOLD VENTURES.

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